
NEW

Philosophical Thoughts.

Philosophical Transactions.

NEW

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NEW
Philosophical Thoughts

ON
MAN, DIVINITY, OUR MORAL IDEAS,
RELIGIOUS WARS, REVOLUTIONS,
AND
THE GOLDEN AGE.

DEDICATED, BY PERMISSION, TO
WILLIAM MORRIS, ESQ.

BY
MR. BEMETZRIEDER.

London :

PRINTED FOR, AND SOLD BY, THE AUTHOR, NO. 36, HIGH STREET, NEAR
DEVONSHIRE STREET, ST. MARY-LE-BONE;

Where also may be had,

His Code of Reason, Discourse on Public Education, and Essay on a Club of Philosophers, in FRENCH.
His Treatise on the Musical Proportions geometrically demonstrated, and the Practical Elements
of Music made easy to the Learned, in ENGLISH. His Instruction Books, FRENCH and ENGLISH,
for the Harpsichord, and on Singing. His Fugue, Humble Petition, Lessons, Songs, &c. &c.

1795.

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

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Philosophical - Psychology

RELIGIOUS WARS, REVOLUTIONS,
MAY, DIVINITY, OUR MORAL IDEAS.

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THE GOLDEN AGE

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DEDICATORY EPISTLE.

DEAR AND RESPECTABLE SIR,

ACCEPT of this homage as a proof of my sincerest gratitude; you have introduced among your friends former Specimens of my feeble Abilities; you have supported them so warmly, that I must acknowledge my heartfelt thanks. You must be the best friend both to Church and State; your religious and political Principles agree with the true Spirit of the English Laws; they do not prevent you from protecting all rational and loyal reasonings; such are and were always my thoughts. You have favourably judged the following Sixteen Articles of my Philosophical Faith, and you think they may do some good to every body; I put them under your immediate Patronage, in hopes that they may vindicate your Judgment.

I would embellish my Homage, but I know that nothing can render it more agreeable to your generous Mind and loyal Heart than a frank Confession of my political Sentiments; therefore I declare that I have no connections with any secret or open enemy of the Country; I am so contented with the Law and Government
of

of England, under whose protection I have lived these last thirteen Years, that I would not subscribe even to a Petition of redress or reform, either in Church or State. I can cordially submit my Will and Opinion to Royalty, Republicanism, Aristocracy, or Democracy, wherever they are lawfully established, but I am convinced that no principle, either religious, philosophical, or political, will do for all; Variety has and will ever reign in moral, as well as in vegetable, animal, and social Life. I cannot delight in the chimerical Idea of an universal fraternity; I do not believe that any modern Judaism, or Free-mason's Vision will ever come to such consequence as in former Times; even then fraternity was far from any kind of universality. Universal Republicanism and Equality may also be ranked with the Philosopher's Stone and universal medicine; neither Calvinism nor Atheism will ever make so much progress as have done, and will always do, the more tolerant doctrines of Religion and Philosophy.

I am, SIR,

Your sincere and most obedient Servant,

BEMETZRIEDER.

NEW

New Philosophical Thoughts.

I.

MAN is above all in the World, but he is surrounded with so many Marvels, that he can think very little of his sublime Organization; every thing attracts his attention, in Petrification, Vegetation, and animal Life; and the Gradations of the innumerable and wonderful species are so imperceptible, from an Atom to a Mountain, from the Grass to a Tree, from an Oyster to a Whale-fish, from a Fly to the Eagle, and from the Ant to the Elephant, that he may easily believe Men only a link of the great chain of Nature's productions. Yet time brings him within himself, and reflection teaches that the intellectual faculties raise Mankind still higher than animal Life; we can examine, compare, judge, reason, think, and communicate our ideas to others by signs, speech, and writing; we have Will and Opinion, and we may believe or disbelieve the Opinion of others, obey or disobey their Will; we may contemplate the celestial Bodies, and even raise our thoughts to a divine Creator. Our corporal faculties, though apparently inferior to those of many living Creatures, are equally eminent; we can strengthen and improve them, and by Art subdue all to our use. We have in our Power the Treasures hid in the Bosom of the Earth, and all that grows on its Surface and its Rivers and Seas, the Elements of Nature, and all materials for new Creations.

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All this Greatness of Man is not without a vulnerable Side; we have daily experiences of it; we fear or wonder at Trifles we only see or hear; we cannot like or dislike things at pleasure; and what comes in our Mind by reflection, belief, or persuasion, has all Power over our Hearts.

II.

DIVINITY is infinite Perfection and infinite Power, containing in itself an infinite number of Stars; each being a Sun for a whole solar System; the Worlds of which contain each an infinite Variety of Wonders.

III.

The innumerable Wonders which fill up the infinite Space of the Universe, displayed all in a Picture by Genius itself, would form but an incomplete image of the Divinity.

IV.

Although Divinity cannot be well described, a cultivated mind conceives its power and perfection, and a grateful heart feels the divine Gifts.

V.

No private Communication with Divinity is wanted; Infancy, Virility, and old Age, shew us both our natural Right and Duty; the new Rights we receive in society impose on us new Duties in proportion; and Man's destiny is fully described in Nature itself; all Wonders our senses can reach, command, and without ceasing, repeat,

“ ADMIRE, STUDY, AND ENJOY.”

VI. From

VI.

From Nature derive also the moral beauties and deformities; it is present to the human mind day and night, and explains itself by its opposites, contrasts, and gradations: we are surrounded with wonders, both asleep and awake; but what charms and delights at sunshine, very often frightens and terrifies in the dark.

VII.

In dreams and visions, God appears like a Man, and is either repenting and mending, or jealous, choleric, vindictive and damning; and we are nothing but mere miserable and impotent Wretches. While we see, when awake, Men muzzling Lions, cutting Mountains, walking under the Earth, travelling above the Seas, flying in the Air, bringing the dead to life, speaking, writing, and acting as wonderful Beings, truly worthy of the Omnipotent divine perfection.

VIII.

The bright rays of the Sun brings our study to Reason, Truth, Virtue, Divinity, and Happiness. While the pale light of the Moon leads our Thoughts to Imagination, Superstition, Gods, Devils, and other heavenly and hellish Spirits.

IX.

Men strongly influenced by these midnight doctrines are enthusiast and credulous, Slaves either of their own, or the delusion of others; both are intolerant and cruel in proportion as they are ignorant: but they should not be blamed, we are not the Master of our own Opinion; it comes from persuasion, which cannot be prohibited nor ordered; they must be pitied, they are unfortunate enough; their hearts and minds are

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always

always troubled and tormented, the former with the fate of Mankind, and the latter with hopes and fears; both taste life only in trembling, and seek always for a better. Those who are busy with the happiness of others, see and hear nothing they can approve; scrutinize words and actions, see crimes and virtue in trifles and indifferent things; abuse their friends and the whole Society of Man; delight only with the savage Children of a forest, and look for a romantic and more enchanting life to come. The timid, on the contrary, are discontented with themselves; their eyes and ears are shut for all that surround them, hear only Angels over their heads in a palace brighter than Sun, of which they think themselves unworthy; and see under their feet deep and horrid caverns, filled with monsters, fire, and furies, to receive their guilty Souls.

X.

The followers of Reason render themselves worthy of a future Life; they cherish Society and all earthly Creatures, admire the celestial Bodies, and study Nature every where, in order to enable us to enjoy all blessings of the present life.—Through their Labours we have already a great and sound Knowledge of the first Elements of Nature, Earth, Water, Air, and Fire; of the Movement, Light, and Sound; of the Vegetation, Minerals and Life itself; of River, Spring, and Sea Water, Tide, Clouds, Rain, Snow, Hail, Wind, Storms, Thunder, Lightning, Hurricanes, Inundations, Floods, Volcanoes, and Earthquakes. We have satisfactory notions on our solar System, we can account for the Sun's different Risings and Settings, the Moon's lighted Phases, the Comets and Eclipses. We know that our World is a Planet, round and nearly four thousand Miles deep; goes round itself, and round the Sun, to fetch our Days, Nights, Seasons, and Years; that the Moon is our Globe's attendant Satellite, goes round us, and with us round the Sun; that

that the Moon does not give us his own light, but reflects only what he receives from the Sun. We know that the light we see in Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and the Georgium Sidus, is similar to that of the Moon; and their Elements similar to those of our World; consequently Planets themselves, and go round the Sun like us, but each his own way; Venus and Mercury between us and the Sun; Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and the Georgium Sidus, between us and the Stars. We know their positive and respective Magnitudes, Distances, and Velocities; the precise Time of their daily rotations and annual Revolutions; the number of Moons or Satellites each is attended with.—We have strong reasons to believe that we are not the only People who go round the Sun; both Moons and Planets must be inhabited: the Stars cannot be mere ornamental lights in the firmament, but are as many Suns, each for some particular Planets and Moons; a great variety of People must go round each Star for the same purpose that we do in going round the Sun.

Here the followers of Reason stop; though they think that there cannot be any end, and that above all we can see or believe we must still find the Supreme omnipotent Being and his infinite Wonders; yet they do not presume to calculate his Divine Power; nor do they pretend that we can discover and follow the Creator of the Universe, from a beginning to any limited Time; but hope we shall be able in a future life to see, admire, and adore the full extent of infinite Power and infinite Perfection. While, every day and on all occasions, they content themselves to raise their thoughts with Confidence to the eternal Throne of the impartial Father of all People; and without fear and trembling resign their hearts and minds to slumber in the bosom of Divinity.

XI.

The followers of Imagination and Superstition are always more numerous than those of Reason, because it is easier to believe the most

romantic Story, and the most marvellous Dream and Vision, than study the most common production of Nature. Hence Centuries are wanted to propagate Science and Virtue; while delusive Metaphysics, absurd Paradoxes, mysterious Dogmas, and unnatural Pieties multiply and vary every day.

XII.

In proportion the Enthusiasts and credulous increase in number, they join in meetings and congregations, and then they begin to speculate and dream day and night; they look in old Stories, oriental Tales, and Poetry, to embellish their Conceits and Visions; every where they see a Divine Providence and the Will of God, and compose mystical, mythological and theological Systems; Time renders their Tenets sacred, and carries them from Place to Place, from Country to Country; their similarity and incomprehensibility render them miraculous and divine, and Millions become Disciples and Brethren. But soon new Conceits and new Dreams divide them; each, defending his Opinion, becomes fanatic; they quarrel and fight. Cunning and bold Men rally the fugitives and retreaters, have private interviews with God, discover a secret Science of Nature, lead to Victory, and become Chiefs and Dictators. Flatterers deify both their Wisdom and Visions, see a sublime Science in their Constitution, and God's Will in their Law, and despise or anathematize all contrary Tenets.

At first Orthodoxy is united with secret Philosophy; but soon the sublime becomes too deep, the Orthodox too simple, and the Speculator too vague; they can no more understand one another; Separation is inevitable. The Adepts, Metaphysicians, and Mythologists, preaching the most marvellous Doctrines, are followed by the greatest Number; become powerful, and oppress the Theologists: The followers of Reason defend the persecuted; both are proscribed; misfortune unites and strengthens them; while prosperity brings the mystical Science with
Metaphysics

Metaphysics and Mythology to light and annihilation, and their followers to Slavery.—The Theologists freed from their Enemies, and seconded by their new friends, purify their Creed, preach, persuade, and become powerful in their turn; but like the former they forget themselves in their prosperity; listen to new Enthusiasts and new fanatic Visionaries; relax from the original doctrine, moral and discipline; make partial Laws against the dissenting and protesting Sects; alienate both heart and mind of the most patient; provoke murmurs, schisms, and insurrections. It is no more the soft voice of Peace and Persuasion which endeavours to settle the disputes; fire and sword are the Orthodox Believer's Arguments. The oppressed Believers emigrate, conspire, and revolt; form new States, strengthen and improve Rivals, and put their native Country in Danger and Confusion. Both Parties curse, damn, assassinate, and massacre their opponents, in the name of God and true Religion.

XIII.

The followers of Reason, seeing their friends so much degenerated as to blaspheme Divinity and abuse Humanity, raise their Voices and call them to their Senses and Virtue. Those, ashamed or offended, turn their animosities against their Benefactors, who persecuted complain haughtily; Justice is slow or inadequate for them; they speak louder and become troublesome to the Rulers; State's orders force them to silence; they give up their mind to imagination and become fanatic themselves, conspire and revolt. All discontented and oppressed Believers join the fanatic Reasoners; both are seconded by jealous and ambitious Politicians; both are encouraged by foreign Spies; and both come to power in disguise, discover the weak side of the union between the State and Orthodoxy, and prepare a Revolution. Though they neither do nor can wish for the same Order, they agree, hide their real intention with salutary reforms and all kinds of desired new Things; they

they astonish every body, all become their Admirers. Feeling their strength, each follows his private resentment and takes away from Government that part of Authority which has offended him ; soon they strip it of all temporal and spiritual power, and let loose all enemies to Church and State. Disorders follow and multiply ; the weakened Governors can no more stop them ; what remains from the noblest social edifice falls down by itself, and leaves nothing but a Chaos of Wills and Opinions.—From the greatest Anarchy arises a new order of things, which in its first movements frightens and terrifies all surrounding States ; a new state Machine goes boldly on, and nobody sees the Mover ; the apparent Rulers fall one after another, yet public business is done ; the watch-word changes, but the Zeal and Success is the same.

This unknown new order of things finds every where Admirers, Friends, and Enemies ; all Churches and States unite and form a general Confederacy against it as a common Enemy ; all dissenting Believers see in it the fall of the high Church and the triumph of their oppressed Brethren, and join with them in heart and spirit ; the Enthusiasts and Adepts ascribe it to the revived mystical Science, and hope that its sublime emanations will soon spread in the neighbouring Countries ; the Visionaries see all spirits busy to make room for their new Jerusalem ; and all Reasoners see in it the work of true Philosophy, but admire, hate, or like it only as far as it agrees with their ideas and Sentiments.

Hence follows the most horrid War, and the most hideous Treacheries accompany it ; both Parties, blinded by Passion and self interest, exceed all rules of Religion, Politic, and Reason ; nobody will see that they must share the Calamities they bring upon others. Those who cannot stifle in their heart all sentiments of humanity must hide it, assume the mask of hypocrisy and imposture, and disguise even their conciliatory wishes. Reciprocal hatred will make such progress, that

that nobody can stop mutual destruction. Blest will be the extraordinary genius, who can enlighten and unite the misguided Men; remove ignorance, the chief ground of National Dissentions; and banish from Earth fanaticism, both religious, philosophical and political: or the Generals of the Armies must at length be disgusted of the cruel and ambiguous orders of their mistaken Rulers, and set up for themselves in the best parts of the disputed Empires; and leave the proud Inhabitants of the large Babylons under the Yoke of Misery, which will soon inspire ideas of Peace, and bring the unfortunate Loyalists back to their primitive Right, both of speculating, dreaming and reasoning.

XIV.

The travelling hordes of the frozen and torrid Zones, who always follow their natural tendency to more fertile Soils, fall upon the scattered remains, subjugate every where both Enthusiasts and Adepts, Dreamers and Believers, Visionaries and Reasoners; mix their wild Opinions with the philosophical, religious, and mystical Dogmas; add their despotic Wills to the weakened Law and humbled Politics; and thus lay, in a Gothick manner, the foundation of new Speculations, new Religions, new Philosophies, and new Empires.

XV.

After a great many similar Experiences Men begin to think, that all Opinions can be but indifferent; that Divinity cannot be in want of any thing; that we can only be good or bad, either for ourselves, for one another, or for Society; that we must seek the approbation of others with our Deeds, and not consult our Opinion in judging the deeds of others; that we must not mind any Opinion for our own Conduct, but rule our Will by Law, which being the general Will, can only lead us to the Good of All.

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In those Times it will no longer be necessary to control Opinion by laws and preaching; every one will respect those of others in the same manner as he does their other beauties and deformities, and will no more consult his own Opinion in his Dealings, than he does his Face. — No law will be wanted to rule the human heart, none will be the slave of his Passions; all will know that we dare not be bad, even for ourselves, being all born for our Parents and first Benefactors, our Friends, and the whole Society of Men; none will look for Wealth and Pleasures which may cost a Tear to another; every one will do all he can to be useful and agreeable to others; and it will be a mental and heartfelt Delight, when we can do something, which may prove advantageous to the whole human Race. — Then,

UNIVERSAL TOLERATION

WILL BRING

UNIVERSAL PEACE,

AND PROMOTE

UNIVERSAL HAPPINESS.



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Q. M. R.

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